

JFK Probe Figure Dies

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Tagged by New Orleans DA as Getaway Pilot

New Orleans, Feb. 22 (AP)—A strange figure in District Attorney Jim Garrison's Kennedy assassination probe was found dead in his bed today—a sheet pulled over his head.

Police would not say whether the man, David W. Ferrie, operator of a flying service here, died of natural causes or by suicide or was slain.

"This is Garrison's baby," a police spokesman said.

A source close to the investigation said there was no evidence of violence. Ferrie had been ill recently with encephalitis.



Jim Garrison

Ferrie, who did private investigating and listed himself as a psychologist, had complained that Garrison had him "pegged as the get-away pilot in an elaborate plot to kill Kennedy." He called it a "big joke."

The district attorney, in an investigation that started in October, has been trying to prove that a conspiracy was hatched here that "culminated in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy" in Dallas.

Garrison promised arrests and convictions, but kept details secret.

International Furor

The probe has stirred an international furor because it appeared to support critics of the Warren Commission who claim that the assassination of the President could hardly have been the work of just one man.

The official commission report said Lee Harvey Oswald shot Kennedy — and there was no credible evidence to show that anyone else was implicated.

Ferrie was interrogated by Garrison's office in November for the second time in connection with the assassination. The first was in 1963.

"We arrested Ferrie 72 hours after John F. Kennedy was assassinated," said Garrison. "The arrest was on the basis of information supplied out of this office. I turned Ferrie over to the FBI on Nov. 25, 1963. As a matter of record at that time, we suggested the FBI take a detailed statement."

Garrison said he had never seen a copy of the FBI interrogation.

"There are 40 pages relating to the interrogation and report



(UPI Telefoto)

David William Ferrie
Pills found near body

on Ferrie which are in the National Archives in Washington," he said. "Only four of these pages are unclassified."

Ferrie repeatedly denied that he ever knew Oswald, a former New Orleans resident.

Ferrie said he and two companions went to Texas from New Orleans the afternoon of the

in Mystery

assassination. He insisted it was a pleasure trip.

"We went to Houston, Galveston and back to Alexandria, La.," he said, adding that he had given a "meticulous" account of the trip during the first interrogation.

Ferrie said it was fruitless to search for an accomplice to Oswald because "my assessment of Oswald is that he would be incapable of any interpersonal relationship, especially anything as delicate as a conspiracy to kill."

"He Found Him"

A police officer outside Ferrie's apartment, shortly after officers arrived today to take away the nude body, pointed to a blond youth with long sideburns and said, "He found him."

The youth was hustled away by police. Before he left, he told a newsman he didn't find the body, didn't know Ferrie and "just happened to wander in."

Ferrie was an odd-looking

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Police and newsmen outside apartment house where David Ferrie's body was found. (Associated Press Wirefoto)

JFK Probe Figure Is Found Dead

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figure. An explosion several years ago cost him his hair and eyebrows. He wore a shaggy toupee and mascara eyebrows.

Police records showed he was fired as an airline pilot after being arrested in Jefferson (county), which adjoins New Orleans, on a morals charge. The case never went to trial.

Garrison said his investigation has unearthed evidence not available to the Warren Commission. He would not elaborate.

Ferrie, a native of Cleveland, had lived in New Orleans the last 15 years. Oswald lived in New Orleans in the summer of 1963.

FBI's First Interest

Ferrie had said the FBI first became interested in him when a New Orleans man identified as Ed Voble reported he served with Oswald in a civil air patrol unit under Ferrie.

Garrison has said he is confident his investigation will prove that the Kennedy assassination was the culmination of a conspiracy in New Orleans.

Ferrie said Saturday that while he was in Texas in 1963 his home was entered by district attorney's investigators, who carted off

books, photographs and personal belongings.

Ferrie said he heard nothing more about the matter until November, when he was summoned to Garrison's office. He said chief investigator Louis Ivon told him Garrison had "positively uncovered a plot in New Orleans to assassinate Kennedy."

He said he was released and not contacted again.

It was learned however, that the district attorney's office later had two men maintaining surveillance of his apartment.

In Fort Worth, Tex., Mrs. Marguerite Oswald mother of Lee Harvey Oswald said: "I've always been amazed that the man (Ferrie) was arrested and questioned, but not interviewed by the Warren Commission."

Seeks Exhumation Of 'Harassed' Man

Pensacola, Fla., Feb. 22 (AP) — The county solicitor was asked today the exhumation of the body of a man who, according to his brother, believed he was being harassed by "agents" following the assassination of President Kennedy.

The man, Thomas Henry Killam, died March 17, 1964, amid shattered glass on a downtown Pensacola street.

The Pensacola News-Journal said Killam was married to a stripper who worked for Jack Ruby in Dallas. The paper said also that Killam worked as a house painter with a man named Jack Carter, who had roomed in Dallas at one time with Lee Harvey Oswald.

Killam's brother, Earl, asked the solicitor to exhume the body to determine the cause of death.

Police listed the death as a probable suicide, but the coroner ruled that Killam fell accidentally through a plate glass window.

Earl Killam was quoted as saying his brother told him that "agents" — whose identity was never specified — harassed him until he left Dallas and then hounded him in Pensacola and Tampa.

The newspaper said that just two days before he died, Thomas Killam said to his brother:

"I'm a dead man. I've run as far as I'm going to run."

Solicitor Carl Harper, who will rule on the exhumation petition, said he had not talked with New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison, who claimed that a plot to kill President Kennedy was devised in New Orleans, but now planned to do so.